

*Export Credits Insurance Act*

**Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that this bill has been introduced, because not only does it seek to continue the Export Credits Insurance Act but it also provides amendments for the purpose of expanding the activities of that corporation.

Canada at this time is facing serious difficulties in the export of a great many commodities. We realize that we are facing difficulties in the export of lead and zinc, copper, wheat and oil, although the difficulties in that direction seem to have been lessening in recent days because of actions taken by the United States government. Nevertheless, with regard to a great many commodities Canada is finding export sales increasingly difficult to obtain.

We are all aware that the Soviet union is engaged in a growing trade offensive, but that country does not have to rely in any sense upon private institutions to make commercial transactions in the commodities available for export. Rather, the Soviet union is able to enter the market by means of long term contracts and by means of credits at very low rates of interest which enable her to undercut markets which might otherwise be those of Canada or of some other western nations. Private enterprise in the ordinary sense of those words is unable to compete with this growing expansion in world trade on the part of the Soviet union.

We see extraordinary statements made from time to time by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and by leading businessmen in this country advocating an expansion of public credit to enable corporations to develop their business in the export field. As a matter of fact, the measure now before us is a good socialist measure. It provides a public corporation to undertake business which private enterprise is either unwilling or unable to engage in. Those who wish to put forward their private enterprise views will say, of course, that this is merely a measure to assist ordinary business establishments. Be that as it may, it is an expansion of the area of government activity. It is necessary according to the government and it is necessary according to the official opposition, and we in this group believe that the Export Credits Insurance Act has been of value to Canada in the past and that with these amendments it will be of greater value in the years ahead.

There are a number of clauses to which one might refer at some length in the course of detailed study, but I do notice that there has been some change in the board of directors. Now the bill states:

There shall be a corporation to be known as Export Credits Insurance Corporation, consisting of

those persons as members who for the time being are the deputy minister of trade and commerce and the deputy minister of finance.

The old section read as follows:

There shall be a corporation to be known as Export Credits Insurance Corporation, consisting of those persons as members who for the time being are the deputy minister of trade and commerce, the deputy minister of finance and the governor of the Bank of Canada.

So by this amendment the government is dropping as a member of the board of directors the governor of the Bank of Canada.

**Mr. Benidickson:** Why?

**Mr. Argue:** It will be very interesting to know why he is being dropped. Is it because he does not see eye to eye with the government in regard to the purpose of this measure? Is it because of some difference with the Minister of Trade and Commerce as to the policy which is being followed? Or is it, perhaps, that he is too busy, that he is overworked, that he has more things to do than he is able to do? I ask this question because we had this same gentleman before another committee in his capacity as a member of the committee having to do with investment funds of the unemployment insurance commission.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would ask the hon. gentleman whether the position of an official, his engagement or his views, have anything to do with the principle of this bill. It might be asked, furthermore, that the hon. member is referring to proceedings in a committee which has not yet reported, and that is a second question; but the reason I intervened was to ask the hon. member to justify his reference to an official as a matter which is involved in the principle of the bill before us.

**Mr. Argue:** But this bill provides that this official is to be dropped from the board of directors. He has been a member of the board, and now he is being dropped.

**Mr. Benidickson:** It was statutory before.

**Mr. Argue:** It was statutory before, and I am now asking for an explanation. The change is made in the first clause of this bill, section 3 of the existing act.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think a discussion of that kind would be more appropriate in committee. It is an incident of the bill. I do not want to prevent the hon. member from discussing a matter which he feels relevant, but that could be done in committee. After all, he is discussing a detail of one clause.

**Mr. Argue:** I understood your point to be that there is really no reference to this gentleman in this bill and that his private opinion expressed in some other place has no